



Interior secretary to announce Tahoe land plans

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Six months of waiting and debating will finally see its fruition next week as U.S. Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton is slated to make an official announcement on which projects will be funded in the latest round of Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act.

Incline Village/Crystal Bay residents will find out if the 770-acre Incline Lake property and the 3-acre Dale Denio property will be acquired as federal lands with some of the \$1.1 billion acquired through public land sales in Southern Nevada.

"I can't confirm or deny what is coming out of (Secretary) Norton's office," said Bureau of Land Management spokeswoman Jo Simpson. "We do know she's going to make the announcement next week.

"We know people are eager to know."

Incline Lake

The 770-acre Incline Lake Property is a multi-family retreat established by Nevada developer Norman Biltz in the late 1930s, now owned by 19 shareholders with Biltz's grandson, Norm Nash, at the helm. It is slated for acquisition using some \$75 million of lands act funds.

Because the U.S. Forest Service cannot maintain or manage the existing buildings on the property (which include a clubhouse and observatory), other partners, including Washoe County, the Nevada Department of Transportation and the Incline Village General Improvement District, were asked to participate in the land's management.

IVGID, in particular, has tentatively agreed to purchase a 5-acre parcel on the property which could be a visitors center, a "gateway" to Incline Village, a Nordic ski center and a meeting/conference faculty, "among other things," IVGID officials said.

The parcel available to IVGID will be "off the table" if Norton doesn't sign it through next week, but possibilities of that seem remote, IVGID officials said.

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Secretary of the
Interior Gale
Norton is expected
to announce next
week whether the
Dale Denio
lakefront property
in Crystal Bay,
above, and some
Incline Lake
property will be acquired as federal lands with funds
from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management
Act.



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"We have expected the announcement for the last several weeks," said IVGID Public Works Director Dan St. John. "We really don't know what her announcement's going to be, other than that Sen. Ensign's office has been clear and unwavering in their support of Incline Lake acquisition."

Sen. John Ensign last Aug. 11 "fast-tracked" the public acquisition of the property calling it "one of the most important (public) acquisitions in Nevada history."

Denio property

After receiving a special request from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, local property owner Dale Denio is slated to receive some \$27 million for three parcels, which make up some 3.5 acres of Crystal Bay lakefront property between the Crystal Towers condominiums and other private lakefront property.

The steeply graded parcel with no beach access has been approved by TRPA to be split into three buildable lots.

If acquired by the Forest Service with lands act funds, the parcel "would be the biggest stretch of public access to the lake between Kings Beach and Lake Tahoe State Park," said Washoe County Manager Katy Singlaub.

USFS officials this week hinted that this property may not be "as done a deal as Incline Lake."

"We don't have any word for sure," said USFS spokesman Rex Norman. "On the record, I know what you know - which is wait for the announcement ... but there has been speculation."

As soon as funding for this funding round is announced, those interested in putting their lands up for consideration in the next have 30 days to solidify their proposals.

IVGID's 112-acre First Creek parcel is one such property. The land brokers estimate the district's property worth to be "in the neighborhood" of \$5 million.

"Norton's announcement will basically kick off round seven (funding)," IVGID's St. John said. "Our clocks will be running, the curiosity for us is 'when' exactly will this happen.

"Either way, we'll be at the ready."

BLM officials said they anticipate Norton's announcement to be made by Feb. 9.

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